LAGGING SECONDS

written by DeadQuency

Genre: Psychological Thriller / Mystery Drama | **Format:** Short Film (approx. 18 minutes) | **Scope:** Single Location / High-Concept| **Tone:** *Ex Machina* meets *The Double*

LOGLINE

A meticulously organized data analyst finds his reality fracturing when his own reflection begins to lag seconds behind his movements, eventually manifesting a sinister independence that threatens to replace him.

SYNOPSIS

Thomas lives by a singular creed: "Order is the only way to survive the chaos." His life is an algorithmic masterpiece of micro-habits and sterile precision. This fragile control shatters when he notices a terrifying glitch—his reflection in the bathroom mirror moves with a two-second delay.

Treating the anomaly as a logical variable to be solved, Thomas begins a series of cold, analytical experiments. But the "Lag" isn't a physical error; it's an existential rupture. As the reflection begins to emote when Thomas is stoic and observe what Thomas ignores, the boundary between the "Original" and the "Image" dissolves. Thomas must face a haunting ultimatum: Is he the master of his timeline, or merely a shadow falling behind the pace of reality?

THEMATIC PILLARS

- **The Paradox of "The Now":** An exploration of temporal displacement. If our perception of reality is delayed, do we ever truly inhabit the present?
- **Perfection vs. Authenticity:** A psychological duel between the flawed, anxious human and the "Ideal Self" trapped behind the glass.
- **The Illusion of Control:** A cautionary tale regarding the human hubris of quantifying existence in the face of uncalculatable entropy.

VISUAL & AUDITORY STRATEGY

- **The Aesthetic: "Clinical Minimalism."** A palette of sterile blues, concrete grays, and stark whites. Initial

symmetrical framing gradually shifts to claustrophobic, off-kilter compositions as Thomas's mind unravels.

- **Lighting:** High-key laboratory lighting transitioning into Chiaroscuro, where shadows become physical entities.
- **Soundscape:** A "Silent Horror" approach. Hyper-real Foley (the scrape of a razor, the hum of a mirror) contrasted against an oppressive, low-frequency electrical drone that shifts pitch as the Lag increases.

PRODUCTION VALUE & STRATEGY

- **High Efficiency / Low Risk:** A "Chamber Piece" designed for a single actor and a single location. Maximum cinematic impact achieved through production design rather than costly VFX.
- **Festival Trajectory:** Targeted at "Cinema of Ideas" tiers, including Clermont-Ferrand, Locarno, and Tallinn Black Nights.
- **Audience:** Appeals to fans of high-concept sci-fi and philosophical horror (A24/Neon aesthetic).

"Lagging Seconds is a visual inquiry into the horror of self-alienation—a study of what happens when the absolute order we build for ourselves is confronted by an uncalculatable, existential glitch."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MA student of Dramatic Literature specializing in the intersection of dramatic structure and psychoanalytic theory. I strive to translate complex psychological abstractions into visceral, immersive cinematic moments that challenge the audience's perception of reality.

Contact
Email: shivaasd76@gmail.com / Instagram:@deab_.quency_

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